Lambda Letters Project

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The Math of Minority Politics

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

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One of the fundamental rules of a democracy is that the majority wins. Our Constitution and Bill of Rights put some limits on that rule. Fundamentally, however, to win in a democracy you need a majority on your side.

In elections for public office, you just need a majority of those voting. So when there is a small turnout in an election, a candidate can win with less than a majority of those eligible to vote.

But in our state legislature, they have a tougher standard. For a bill to pass in the legislature it must have the votes of a majority of the legislative districts. There are 80 Assembly districts in California. For a bill to pass in the Assembly, it must get 41 votes. There are 40 state Senate districts in California. So a bill must get 21 yes votes in order to be approved by the Senate.

The necessary majority does not decrease if not all legislators vote. It doesn't even go down if some of the legislative districts are vacant because a legislator has died, or for some other reason. You always need 41 votes in the Assembly and 21 votes in the Senate.

Currently we have just six openly gay or lesbian legislators in our state legislature. Three are in the Assembly and three are in the Senate. So any time you try to pass a bill that helps the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) community, you start with just three votes. The remaining 38 Assembly and 18 Senate votes must come from the other legislators.

One important way to persuade straight legislators to support bills of importance to the LGBTI community is to support the bills they care about. There are several caucuses of legislators in the state legislature, including the Black Caucus, Latino/Latina Caucus, Asian Pacific Islander Caucus, Women's Caucus, and LGBTI Caucus. The legislators in these caucuses introduce bills on a number of topics. But those in the Black Caucus, for example, tend to introduce a core of bills that are of great importance to the black community. Each caucus has a core of bills of interest to their minority that they introduce each year.

These other caucuses have the same problem that the LGBTI legislative caucus has. They don't have enough votes to get bills passed all by themselves. One important way to get their votes on our LGBTI bills is to support their bills. If they see lots of letters, e-mails, and phone calls coming in from the LGBTI community to support their bills, they will be more inclined to support the LGBTI community on the bills we care about.

As a matter of fact, we have been getting immense support from straight women legislators and from legislators of color. AB 19 is the bill that would allow same-sex marriage in California. The bill has 29 sponsors and cosponsors. Eleven of them are straight person-of-color legislators. One of them is Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez. He is the most powerful member of the Assembly. His support of AB 19 gives it a tremendous boost. Eleven of the bill's cosponsors are straight women. In fact, 23 of the bill's 29 sponsors and cosponsors are straight legislators. AB 19 has been doing very well so far. But the bottom line is that the bill probably would be dead without the support of these straight allies.

If you look at the Legislative Update bill list in this newsletter, you will see that there are 13 LGBTI bills that the Lambda Letters Project supports in that list. Seven of those bills were introduced by our straight allies in the legislature.

One of the easiest ways that we can get straight legislators to support us on their issues is to support them on theirs. So when Lambda Letters asks you to sign a letter or send an e-mail on a bill of importance to people of color or women, please don't think "that's not my issue." Please return that letter. Let our straight allies know that we are grateful for their support by supporting them on the issues they care about.

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Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters and Messages Collected

April, 2005	46,361 letters & e-mails
In all of 2005	110,127 letters & e-mails

Dollars Spent

March, 2005	$3,581
In all of 2005	$14,858

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Our Mission

To promote the social, economic, and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals, couples, and families; people affected by HIV/AIDS; people of color; and women. We do this by urging elected officials to enact and support legislation that accomplishes this goal.

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In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684.
In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212.
The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

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HIV/AIDS Issue

Ease Needle-Exchange Rules

By Joy Fisher, Legislative Analyst

Fourteen California cities and counties have currently authorized clean-needle and syringe exchange projects (NEPs) in an effort to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS among injection drug users. To participate in a NEP, injection drug users are required to exchange a used needle for a new, sterile needle. NEPs often also provide peer education and referrals to drug treatment centers and methadone clinics.

A study of San Francisco's NEP found that over a five-year period there was no significant increase in drug use by current users as the result of the program's availability. In fact, the frequency of injecting among study participants decreased. In 2002 the Department of Health Services concluded that there is conclusive scientific evidence that NEPs, as part of a comprehensive HIV prevention strategy, are an effective public health intervention that reduces the transmission of HIV and does not encourage the illegal use of drugs. However, current law allows cities and counties to establish and operate NEPs only after the declaration of a local emergency, which must then be renewed every two weeks by the board of supervisors or the city council. This renewal process has put effective NEPs in a perilous state: one absent supervisor or city council member can effectively make a well-funded NEP "illegal" until the next declaration.

AB 547 (Patty Berg, D–Eureka) would create the Clean Needle and Syringe Exchange Program. It would exempt public entities, their agents, and employees from criminal prosecution for distributing needles or syringes as part of a locally authorized clean-needle and syringe project without a declaration of a local emergency. Instead, a NEP could be established by the action of a county board of supervisors and local health officer or health commission of that county; the city council, mayor, and local health officer of a city with a health department; or the city council and mayor of a city without a health department.

The bill would also require cities and counties that establish NEPs to authorize the exchange of clean hypodermic needles and syringes. As part of a network of comprehensive services, including treatment services, this would do much to combat the spread of HIV and blood-borne hepatitis infections, subject to the availability of funding.

AB 547 would also exempt providers and participants from criminal prosecution for possession of needles or syringes during participation in the NEP. Injection drug users are the second largest group at risk of becoming infected with HIV/AIDS. They are the primary source of heterosexual, female, and perinatal transmission in California. Please write to the Senate Health Committee in support of this important bill.

People of Color Issue

Support Fair Treatment for the Uninsured

By Marty Martinez, Legislative Analyst

Please write letters in support of the Hospital Billing Fairness Act (SB 24), introduced by Senator Deborah Ortiz (D–Sacramento), which will help low-income persons receive care from hospitals and without being charged exorbitant rates.

In many cases, hospitals charge uninsured patients three to ten times what they charge insurance companies for exactly the same service because insurance providers can negotiate large discounts for their enrollees. Because communities of color are more likely to be uninsured, they are also often less likely to be offered the chance to negotiate for better rates of payment for medical services. Therefore, they are more likely to be preyed upon by this form of price-gouging.

SB 24 would address these problems by requiring hospitals in California to develop and post information about their charity-care policies; capping payments for patients with incomes up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level at the amount charged by Medicare, Medi-Cal, and Worker's Compensation; and limiting the collection actions of hospitals. In addition, the Attorney General would be given the authority to investigate whether hospitals are meeting the minimum charity-care requirements and providing a sufficient level of charity care to justify their tax exemptions.

Finally, the bill would require nonprofit hospitals that receive significant tax benefits from the state to provide reasonable charity care and reduced payment policies for low-income patients.

This is an important step in the right direction. Please write to the Assembly Health Committee and urge them to support this important piece of legislation.

LGBTI Issue

Ban Discrimination in Public Accommodations

By Shirin Buckman, Legislative Analyst

Please urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to support AB 1400. This bill is authored by Assemblymember John Laird (D–Santa Cruz) and sponsored by Equality California.

AB 1400 would amend the Unruh Civil Rights Act to add sexual orientation and marital status as prohibited bases of discrimination. Currently the Unruh Civil Rights Act prohibits business establishments from treating people unfairly based on sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, or medical condition. Existing law also allows for civil penalties if the business is proven to have discriminated on one of these bases.

Adding sexual orientation and marital status as bases of discrimination benefits the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and straight communities alike. By including sexual orientation and marital status, AB 1400 expands the definition of "all persons *within the jurisdiction of this state [as being] free and equal.*"

As defined within the act, "business establishments" include for-profit and nonprofit organizations, retail stores, hospitals, public agencies, housing accommodations (except mobile home parks), and public agencies. If a business establishment violates the Unruh Act, it will pay out-of-pocket expenses or damages for emotional distress. The business can even be shut down for unfair practices.

It is important to include as many categories as possible in the Unruh Act. Passage of AB 1400 costs the state no money. Instead, it benefits the citizens of the state by punishing business establishments that discriminate.

Please ask for a yes vote on AB 1400 to benefit lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual individuals of California.

Women's Issue

Ending Wage Discrimination

By Kathleen Watanabe, Legislative Analyst

Even though it has been over 40 years since the passage of the Equal Pay Act, the wage gap between men and women still exists. Wage and employment discrimination persists at an intolerable level even though it is against the law. According to the Census Bureau in 2004, women on average earn 76 cents for each dollar paid to their male counterparts. Over a working lifetime, this wage disparity adds up to $523,000 in lost wages. This disparity impacts Social Security benefits and pensions. African-American women are paid only 65 cents, while Hispanic women are paid only 53 cents. This wage inequality particularly affects families in which women are the sole income earners—single women, divorced women, and widows. According to an analysis of data in over 300 classifications provided by the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics in 2001, women earn less in every occupational classification for which enough data is available, including occupations dominated by women (for example, cashiers, retail sales, registered nurses, and teachers).

AB 169 by Assemblymember Jenny Oropeza (D–Carson) amends the California Labor Code to strengthen individuals' private right of action to recover costs of pay discrimination. If an employer discriminates, an employee is entitled to recover the balance of the unpaid wages, including interest, an equal amount as liquidated damages, and an amount equal to double the balance of the wages due as a civil penalty. If an employer willfully violates the law, it is required to pay four times, instead of double, the balance of the wages due as a civil penalty. AB 169 would require that collected civil penalties be distributed 75% to the Division of Labor Standard Enforcement for enforcement and education on the law and 25% to the employee.

Although AB 169 has passed the Assembly, it needs your help in order to pass the Senate. Please write to the Senate Labor Committee and urge them to approve this bill when it comes to them. A clear and strong message must be sent to those who exploit women that it will no longer be tolerated in California.

June Legislative Update

Each bill introduced in the state legislature must be reviewed by a policy committee in each house before the full Assembly and Senate can vote on them. The Assembly Health Committee is one example of a policy committee. The job of the policy committee is to decide if the bill makes sense from a policy standpoint.

Any bill expected to cost the state or local governments $150,000 or more per year must also be voted on by the Appropriations Committee of each house before the full house can vote on it. These are called "fiscal" bills. Generally the Appropriations Committee puts all bills that cost that much or more in their suspense file. Then all the suspense bills are voted on by the committee just before the deadline for getting them out of the Appropriations Committee.

There are deadlines for getting bills through the committees. All fiscal bills must be approved by the policy committee of the house in which they were introduced by no later than April 29. Non-fiscal bills must be approved by the policy committee of the house in which they were introduced by no later than May 6. Then all bills referred to the Appropriations Committee must be approved by that committee, in the bill's house of origin, no later than May 27.

Finally, all bills must be approved by their full house of origin no later than June 3.

The purpose of these deadlines is to ensure that bills move forward in time to be passed before the legislature closes for the year. Any bill missing these deadlines dies. No further action is permitted on the bill unless its author gets a waiver of the rules.

There are exceptions to the above rules. Concurrent Resolutions (ACRs and SCRs) and Joint Resolutions (AJRs and SJRs) are not subject to those limits. For example, ACR 2, found in the following list, may still be acted upon this year even though it has not yet been heard by any committee.

HIV/AIDS Issues

AB 73 (Dario Frommer, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To establish the California Rx Prescription Drug Web Site Program, which would provide information to California residents about options for obtaining prescription drugs at affordable prices. This bill would require the Web site, at a minimum, to provide information about—and establish electronic links to—certain federal, state, and pharmaceutical programs, and pharmacies that are located in Canada, the United Kingdom, and Ireland that meet specified requirements.
Status: Referred first to the Assembly Health Committee and then to the Assembly Business and Professions Committee. Approved by Assembly Business and Professions Committee. Put in the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 95 (Paul Koretz, D–West Hollywood)
Purpose: To require manufacturers of drugs for life-threatening chronic conditions that are on the list for Medi-Cal or the AIDS Drugs Assistance Program to pay the state a rebate equal to the costs of marketing that drug. The bill also would require these manufacturers to disclose to the state all costs incurred in the marketing of the drugs to consumers and physicians.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 228 (Paul Koretz, D–West Hollywood)
Purpose: To prohibit a healthcare service plan and a health insurer from denying coverage for the costs of organ or tissue transplantation services on the basis that the enrollee, subscriber, insured, or policyholder is infected with HIV.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Awaiting assignment to a Senate committee.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 349 (Dennis Mountjoy, R–Monrovia)
Purpose: To prohibit certain sexual instruction or counseling of pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 6, inclusive; and to require a school district to provide notice and obtain the written approval from parents or guardians in order to provide this instruction or counseling to pupils in grades 7 to 12.
Status: Failed in the Assembly Education Committee. **LLP Position:** Oppose.

AB 547 (Patty Berg, D–Eureka)
Purpose: To allow local governments to establish and maintain clean needle and syringe exchange programs without having to declare a health state of emergency every two weeks.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Referred to the Senate Health Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 568 (Bonnie Garcia, R–Cathedral City)
Purpose: To require HIV testing to be offered to women at annual obstetrics-gynecology appointments and at first prenatal appointments.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 654 (Patty Berg D–Eureka)
Purpose: To allow an adult who meets certain qualifications, and who has been determined by his

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or her attending physician to be suffering from a terminal disease, as defined, to make a request for medication for the purpose of ending his or her life in a humane and dignified manner.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Judiciary and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1142 (Mervyn Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To establish a statewide African-American HIV/AIDS Initiative to address the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on the health of African-Americans by coordinating prevention and service networks around the state and increasing the capacity of core service providers. The initiative would be implemented in five regional centers.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1677 (Paul Koretz, D–West Hollywood)
Purpose: To require state prisons to allow nonprofits or healthcare agencies to distribute condoms and dental dams to prisoners in state prisons.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Public Safety Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 945 (Nell Soto, D–Pomona)
Purpose: To enact legislation requiring the state to collect HIV test results, for epidemiological purposes only, in a manner that satisfies the needs of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ensure maximum accuracy of the data. This involves including the name of the person being tested in the record, as now required by the federal government.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health Committee. Referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Support.

LGBTI Issues

AB 12 (Chuck Devore, R–Irvine)
Purpose: To ask the California Law Revision Commission to study the feasibility of a law to provide that real property (such as a home) may be transferred to a beneficiary upon the death of the owner by recording, prior to the owner's death, a beneficiary deed signed by the owner of the property interest. Property transferred this way would not have to go through the long, expensive probate process.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 19 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow same-sex couples to obtain marriage licenses in California and to establish that no clergy or religious organization can be required to solemnize any marriage to which they have a religious objection.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 195 (Mervyn Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: When the State Personnel Board finds that a public employee (or an applicant for public employment) has been discriminated against by his or her employer in ways that are forbidden by state law, it may order that the employee be hired, reinstated, or upgraded with or without back pay and compensatory damages. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity are among the prohibited forms of discrimination. This bill would permit the State Personnel Board to award attorneys fees to the complainant.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 220 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco, Chair, Committee on Public Domestic Violence)
Purpose: To amend several codes' sections that refer to "battered woman syndrome" and change those references to "intimate partner battering." This bill would therefore help members of LGBTI couples who are subject to this battering.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 378 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: All persons in California have the right to be free from any violence, or intimidation by threat of violence, because of their race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or position in a labor dispute, or because another person perceives them to have any of those characteristics. Existing law allows an attorney general, district attorney, city attorney, or aggrieved individual to bring a civil action against any person who interferes by threats, intimidation, or coercion, with the exercise or enjoyment of an individual's rights. This bill would increase the statute of limitation for the initiation of such an action from one year to three years.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee for a vote on June 7.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 606 (Lloyd Levine, D–Sherman Oaks)
Purpose: To declare the intent of the Legislature to discourage discrimination and harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons (LGBT) and other minority groups.
Status: Has been made a two-year bill. No action will be taken on it until 2006.
LLP Position: Watch. Probably support.

AB 723 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To require school districts to provide classes in tolerance for all the groups covered by California's hate crimes laws.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Education Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 866 (Leland Yee, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: Current law has a form statement that candidates for political office may sign on a voluntary basis. It is a pledge to engage in a fair and clean campaign. This bill would amend the pledge to include a statement that the candidate will not use, or permit to be used, any appeal to negative prejudice based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate Elections and Reapportionment Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1400 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To amend the Unruh Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of familial status, marital status, and sexual orientation.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee for a vote on June 14.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1586 (Paul Koretz, D–West Hollywood)
Purpose: To prohibit health insurance providers from refusing to insure transgender people.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate. Not assigned to a committee yet.
LLP Position: Support.

ACA 3 (Ray Haynes, R–Temecula)
Purpose: To amend the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage permanently in California and to take away the benefits that domestic partners have obtained over the past few years. This bill would also prohibit the granting of marriage-like benefits to them in the future.
Status: Defeated in the Assembly Judiciary Committee. **LLP Position:** Oppose.

SB 181 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To ban discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender against members of the state Military Reserve, state Naval Militia, or a person on state active duty.
Status: Referred to the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. No hearing date set yet. The bill is probably dead. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 243 (Bob Dutton, R–Rancho Cucamonga)
Purpose: To authorize a credit against state income taxes in an amount equal to the amount paid for property taxes during the taxable year on the primary residence of a person or spouse of a person who, during that taxable year, was deployed in a combat or war zone.
Status: Testimony taken in the Senate Committee on Revenue. Not voted on by the committee yet. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Support if domestic partner added alongside spouse.

Continued on page 6

Legislative Update

Continued from page 5

SB 300 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To increase the circumstances under which an employer must allow an employee to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a seriously ill family member. The need to care for a domestic partner would be added to the list, among others.
Status: Approved by the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on May 26.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 973 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To entitle employees of state and local governments (and school districts) who retired prior to January 1, 2001, to elect or change any optional retirement allowance, if specified criteria are satisfied. This would apply to their domestic partners too.
Status: Approved by the Senate PERS Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on May 23.
LLP Position: Support.

SCA 1 (Bill Morrow, R–San Juan Capistrano)
Purpose: To amend the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage permanently in California and to take away the benefits that domestic partners have obtained over the past few years. This bill would also prohibit the granting of marriage-like benefits to them in the future.
Status: Defeated in the Senate Judiciary Committee. **LLP Position:** Oppose.

People of Color Issues

AB 13 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To prohibit, with certain exceptions, public schools from using the name "Redskins" as a school or team mascot, name, or nickname.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate Education Committee for a vote on June 8.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 15 (Jerome Horton, D–Inglewood)
Purpose: To encourage schools to include a discussion of the contributions of Filipinos to the war effort during World War II.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Education Committee. Awaiting a final vote on the Assembly floor. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 22 (Sally Lieber, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To establish the crime of trafficking of a person for forced labor or services and the crime of trafficking of a minor for sexual servitude, both punishable as felonies. This bill would also require restitution to trafficking victims, and would require the development of a training program for peace officers on the subject of human trafficking. It would also require the Victim's Compensation and Government Claims Board to oversee local shelters for human trafficking victims. It would also require the Attorney General to make fighting human trafficking a high priority.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Public Safety Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a vote on May 25.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 41 (Leland Yee, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To establish the crime of trafficking of a person for forced labor or services and the crime of trafficking of a minor for sexual servitude, both punishable as felonies. This bill would also require restitution to trafficking victims.
Status: Failed in the Assembly Public Safety Committee. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 74 (Mike Gordon, D–El Segundo)
Purpose: To establish the California Prescription Telephone Drug Hotline, which would provide information to consumers and healthcare providers about options for obtaining prescription drugs at affordable prices. People would call a low-cost (maximum 50 cents) toll phone number.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Business and Professions Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support if amended to make the hotline available through a toll-free number.

AB 75 (Dario Frommer, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To establish the California Rx Plus State Pharmacy Assistance Program, which would provide low-cost drugs to low-income Californians. This bill would authorize the state to negotiate drug rebate agreements with drug manufacturers to provide for program drug discounts. Would authorize any licensed pharmacy or drug manufacturer to provide services under the program.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Business and Professions Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 76 (Dario Frommer, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To establish the Office of Pharmaceutical Purchasing within the California Health and Human Services Agency with authority and duties to purchase prescription drugs for state agencies. This bill would authorize the office to negotiate the lowest prices possible for prescription drugs.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Business and Professions Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Watch over concerns whether this is the most efficient way to reduce costs and also ensure that all necessary medications are available to patients.

AB 77 (Dario Frommer, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To establish a pilot project requiring the Department of Corrections to contract with outside agencies to provide healthcare services, including medications, to prison inmates. The purpose of the pilot project would be to see if it would reduce the department's costs.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate. Not assigned to a Senate Committee yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 117 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: Currently there are eight regional centers for approving treatment authorization requests (TARs) for people on Medi-Cal. The centers do not have standardized criteria for approvals of requests. This bill would create one central office for approving TARs.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Watch. It would be bad if the bill resulted in a reduction in the number of staff reviewing TARs.

AB 122 (Todd Spitzer, R–Orange)
Purpose: To require all child daycare facilities not subject to existing liability insurance or bond requirements to maintain sufficient liability insurance or a bond to cover injury to clients and guests, or else to tell parents that they do not have insurance.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Human Services Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Watch. This could run mom-and-pop daycare centers out of business.

AB 124 (Mervyn Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To require each state agency to establish an equal opportunity program to ensure that the state policy of providing equal access to state jobs, work assignment, training, and other employment-related opportunities for all qualified job applicants and employees—based on merit and nondiscrimination in every aspect of personnel policies and employment practices—is fully implemented. It would require the State Personnel Board to collect employment data based on race, ethnicity, and gender.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate. Sent to the Senate PERS Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 125 (Mervyn Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To make the punishment the same for possession of either cocaine base or powder. Currently the punishment for possessing base is greater. Cocaine base is less expensive and is more common in communities of color than in white communities.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Awaiting a final vote on the Assembly floor. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 237 (Juan Arambula, D–Fresno)
Purpose: Existing law requires the Department of Housing and Community Development to make grants or loans to local public entities, nonprofit corporations, and limited partnerships for the construction or rehabilitation of housing for agricultural employees and their families. Existing law also requires that grants and loans be matched

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by the grantee with at least equal amounts of federal moneys, other cash investments, or in-kind contribution. This bill would authorize the department to forgive a loan if it determines that forgiveness is necessary to the financing or continued viability of housing pursuant to this program. It would also authorize the department to waive the matching requirement for migrant housing funded by specified bond funds if the department finds that the waiver is necessary to ensure that the housing can be financed.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee. Hearing canceled by the author. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 306 (Joe Baca, D–San Bernardino)
Purpose: Changed to a military bill unrelated to our core issue areas.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** None.

AB 332 (Russ Bogh, R–Beaumont)
Purpose: To provide that no law enforcement entity or any local governing body may adopt an ordinance, rule, regulation, or order, or otherwise implement a policy, that prohibits law enforcement officers from initiating action to discover a person's alien status or that prohibits a law enforcement officer from arresting or booking a person for entering the country illegally.
Status: Defeated in the Assembly Public Safety Committee. **LLP Position:** Oppose.

AB 368 (Noreen Evans, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To require the state and counties to provide various welfare-to-work services and childcare services, maintain a safety net for children, encourage and assist family stability and unity, and assist and serve eligible legal aliens.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Human Services Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a hearing on May 25.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 379 (Noreen Evans, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To allow the following activities to be counted toward the 20-hours-per-week core activity requirement of the CalWORKs program: satisfactory progress in a secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general education development, vocational education and training, secondary school or general educational development, or other activities necessary to assist an individual in obtaining unsubsidized employment.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Sent to the Assembly floor for a final vote in that house. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 408 (Van Tran, R–Dana Point)
Purpose: To repeal provisions requiring the state to investigate discrimination in lending practices for purchases of housing accommodations.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Banking and Finance Committee for a vote on April 18. Hearing canceled by the author. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Oppose.

AB 432 (Jenny Oropeza, D–Long Beach)
Purpose: To increase the number of places and the time in which new citizens may register and vote. Also reduces the time before election day they must have become a citizen in order to register and vote.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Awaiting a final vote on the Assembly floor. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 469 (Leland Yee, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To require the state to seek a waiver allowing it to pay for otherwise Medi-Cal covered services when provided to beneficiaries residing in supportive housing run by local governments.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Health Committee for a hearing on April 26. Hearing cancelled by the author. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 477 (Joe Baca, D–San Bernardino)
Purpose: To allow certain providers of in-home supportive services to people on public assistance to purchase health insurance coverage for their employees and employees families (including domestic partners) through the Public Employees' Medical and Hospital Care Act, if the coverage is eligible for maximum federal financial participation. There would be limits on state financing of the coverage.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Human Services Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 482 (Loni Hancock, D–Berkeley)
Purpose: To require that certain limited-English students take an achievement test in English and then again in their native language.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Education Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Watch.

AB 503 (Sally Lieber, D–Santa Clara)
Purpose: To require the state to prepare a bill of rights that includes specified rights and to ensure that each county provides each CalWORKs recipient a copy of that bill of rights in his or her native language.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Human Services Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 680 (Wilma Chan, D–Oakland)
Purpose: Current law requires school districts with large language minority student populations to translate, into that minority language, all reports, notices, statements, and other documents sent to parents or guardians of those students. This bill would require the State Board of Education to monitor compliance with this law. School districts would be required to report on their compliance, and the State Board of Education would be required to accept competitive bid requests from school districts for funds to help school districts pay for translating documents.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Education Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 683 (Simon Salinas, D–Salinas)
Purpose: To state the intent of the Legislature to create a primary care insurance program for chronically and historically uninsured industries in the state.
Status: Introduced. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Watch. Probably support.

AB 775 (Leland Yee, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To prohibit any state or local governmental agency, or any public or private agency that receives state funding, from using any child, or permitting any child to be used, as an interpreter, as defined, in any hospital, clinic, or physician office in the context of diagnosis and treatment, except as specified.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Business and Professions Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 855 (Karen Bass, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To provide that, with certain exceptions, a person convicted of drug-related felonies shall be eligible to receive CalWORKs or food stamp benefits if he or she meets certain conditions of eligibility. Does not apply to drug dealers or those who persuade minors to be drug dealers.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Human Services Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 934 (Mark Wyland, R–Del Mar)
Purpose: To prohibit a person from registering to vote unless he or she can provide proof of citizenship at the time of registration. A person already registered as of January 1, 2006, would not be required to submit proof of citizenship unless that person were to change registration from one county to another. The bill is probably dead.
Status: Failed in the Assembly Elections Committee. Reconsideration granted.
LLP Position: Oppose.

AB 1215 (Mark Wyland, R–Del Mar)
Purpose: To require schools to provide parents requesting a waiver from English-immersion schooling for their child with information about certain test score data of English learner pupils enrolled in bilingual education classes, and to require the parent to sign a document stating that he or she understands the information. The bill would prohibit teachers and administrators from recommending that a pupil receive bilingual education instead of English-immersion instruction.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Education

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Legislative Update

Continued from page 7

Committee. No hearing date set yet. The bill is probably dead. **LLP Position:** Oppose.

AB 1338 (Joe Nation, D–San Rafael)
Purpose: To require that a dependent child of the court who is not a citizen of the United States and for whom the court has determined parental reunification is no longer an option, be provided an attorney specializing in immigration law who may pursue special immigrant status or any other avenue to obtain legal permanent resident status or citizenship for that child.
Status: Passed by the Assembly Judiciary Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1465 (Dennis Mountjoy, R–Monrovia)
Purpose: To bar state prison staff, other than a physician, from interfering with the delivery of a treatment prescribed by a physician unless imminent risk of bodily harm to the physician, staff, or inmate requires alternate or modified procedures.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Business and Professions Committee. No hearing date set yet. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Support.

ACA 6 (Mark Wyland, R–Vista)
Purpose: To amend the state constitution to prohibit the state from issuing any driver's license or state identification card, providing in-state tuition or fees for postsecondary education, granting any voting privileges, or providing any health, social, or other state or local public benefit to any person who is neither a citizen of the United States nor any alien lawfully present in the United States, unless the privilege, service, or the benefit is required by federal law.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Oppose.

ACAX1 4 (Rick Keene, R–Chico)
Purpose: To amend the state constitution to require that reductions be imposed automatically on all General Fund appropriations enacted on or before the date of a proclamation by the governor that the state's income and expenses are significantly out of balance. The amounts of the cuts would be by a percentage estimated by the Director of Finance to cause total General Fund appropriations not to exceed General Fund revenues by the end of that fiscal year. The cuts would go into effect 45 days after the proclamation unless state legislators pass legislation to address the problem prior to that 45-day deadline.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Budget Process Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Oppose. Arbitrary, statewide cuts to all programs could be devastating to vital programs.

ACR 3 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To proclaim May 2–8, 2005, as California Holocaust Memorial Week and urge Californians to observe these days of remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust in an appropriate manner.
Status: Approved by the legislature. Sent to the governor for signature or veto.
LLP Position: Support.

AJR 1 (Rudy Bermudez, D–Bellflower)
Purpose: To memorialize the president and Congress to urge the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee and the United States Postal Service to issue a commemorative stamp to honor Dr. Dalip S. Saund, an outstanding immigrant from India. This bill would encourage Californians to celebrate his birthday each year.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate. Not assigned to a committee yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AJR 2 (Noreen Evans, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To memorialize the president and Congress to honor the contributions of Filipino-American war veterans and direct the federal government to immediately pay promised veterans' benefits as the first order of business of the 109th Congress.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate. Not assigned to a committee yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 19 (Deborah Ortiz, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To establish the California Pharmacy Assistance Program (Cal Rx). This bill would require the program to negotiate drug rebates with drug manufacturers in order to provide low-cost drugs to people on limited incomes but who have too much income to qualify for Medi-Cal. The program may be run by the state or a third-party vendor. This bill would establish a program for pharmacists or drug manufacturers to sell discounted drugs to California Rx participants.
Status: Referred to the Senate Health Committee for a vote on April 20. Hearing postponed by committee. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 23 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To require the Employment Development Department to send informational brochures on the Healthy Families and Medi-Cal programs to employers for distribution to their employees. This bill would establish a system to allow employees to have the family contribution payments for healthcare coverage under the Healthy Families Program deducted from the employee's pay and transmitted to the state. This bill would require the state to do outreach and marketing on the Healthy families program and Medi-Cal to enroll more qualified participants.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on May 26. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 24 (Deborah Ortiz, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To require each private hospital to develop a written reduced-cost, charity care policy and application form and to provide these to patients. This bill would also limit debt collection activities of the hospital during the first 150 days after discharge of the patient.
Status: Approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on May 23.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 26 (Dennis Hollingsworth, R–Temecula)
Purpose: To reduce state income taxes, effective January 1, 2003. This bill would eliminate them entirely beginning January 1, 2007.
Status: Referred to the Senate Revenue and Tax Committee. No hearing date set yet. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Oppose. This bill would devastate the state's public health and social services programs.

SB 60 (Gilbert Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow certain undocumented immigrants to obtain drivers licenses in California. These licenses would permit them to drive legally. They would not be legal for identification purposes or for entering a federal building or an airplane.
Status: Approved by the Senate Transportation Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 100 (Richard Alarcon, D–Van Nuys)
Purpose: California ranks 51st among the states and the District of Columbia in the level of reimbursement per Medi-Cal payment to healthcare providers. This bill would state the Legislature's intent to increase the payment rate for Medi-Cal.
Status: Introduced. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 112 (Deborah Ortiz, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: The state Department of Social Services distributes funds from the federal Refugee Act of 1980 to the counties in California. These funds pay for employment-related and English language training programs to immigrant refugees in those counties. Currently the money is divided up by percentages of refugees on public assistance in each county. If 10% of the refugees statewide, who are on public assistance, live in County A, County A gets 10% of the funds. This bill would make the division of funds based on the same formula used by the federal government in distributing funds to the states. That is, distribution to the counties would be based on the proportion of refugees that each county receives whether or not they are all on aid.
Status: Approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Awaiting a final vote on the Senate floor. **LLP Position:** Support.

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name

address

city, state, zip

June 15, 2005

The Hon. Deborah Ortiz
The California State Legislature
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Ortiz :

I am writing to express my support for AB 547. This bill would create the Clean Needle and Syringe Exchange Program. Unlike current law, it would exempt public entities, their agents, and employees from criminal prosecution for distributing needles or syringes as part of a locally authorized clean-needle and syringe project, without a declaration of a local emergency.

Current law allows cities and counties to establish and operate clean-needle and syringe exchange projects (NEPs) only after the declaration of a local emergency. This declaration must then be renewed every two weeks by the board of supervisors or city council. This renewal process has put effective NEPs in a perilous state, because one absent supervisor or city council member could effectively make a well-funded NEP "illegal" until the next declaration.

Streamlining the NEP process is important because injection drug users are the second largest group at risk of becoming infected with HIV/AIDS, and they are the primary source of heterosexual, female, and perinatal transmission in California. Curtailing this source of disease transmission is therefore of the utmost importance.

In 2002 the Department of Health Services concluded that there is conclusive scientific evidence that NEPs, as part of a comprehensive HIV prevention strategy, are an effective public health intervention that reduces the transmission of HIV and does not encourage the illegal use of drugs.

I strongly support this bill and urge an "aye" vote.

Sincerely,

name

address

city, state, zip

June 15, 2005

The Hon. Gilbert Cedillo
The California State Legislature
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Cedillo :

Please support AB 1400, authored by Assemblymember John Laird (D–Santa Cruz), when it comes before you in the Senate Judiciary Committee. AB 1400 amends the Unruh Civil Rights Act. It adds sexual orientation and marital status to the act as prohibited forms of discrimination. Currently the Unruh Act prohibits business establishments from treating people unfairly based on sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, or medical condition. Existing law also allows for civil penalties if the business is proven to have violated the Unruh Act.

Adding sexual orientation and marital status as prohibited forms of discrimination benefits the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and straight communities alike. By including sexual orientation and marital status, AB 1400 expands the definition of "all persons within the jurisdiction of this state [as being] free and equal." Business establishments, as defined within the act, include for-profit and non-profit organizations, retail stores, hospitals, public agencies, housing accommodations (except mobile home parks), and public agencies. If a business establishment violates the law, it will pay out-of-pocket expenses or damages for emotional distress. A business can even be shut down for unfair practices.

It is important that the Unruh Act protect as many categories of people as possible. Passage of AB 1400 costs the state no money. It is not anti-business, nor does it present obstacles to starting a new business. Instead, it benefits the citizens of our state by punishing business establishments that discriminate. Please support a bill that protects lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual individuals of California. Please vote for AB 1400.

Sincerely,

name

address

city, state, zip

June 15, 2005

The Hon. Dave Jones
The California State Legislature
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember Jones:

Please support the Hospital Billing Fairness Act (SB 24). Unfortunately, some hospitals have abused their nonprofit status by failing to provide appropriate financial support for their patients in need. SB 24 guarantees that these hospitals will provide reasonable avenues for bill payment and options for charity care for low-income individuals and families.

In many cases, hospitals charge uninsured patients three to ten times what they charge insurance companies for exactly the same service because insurance companies can negotiate large discounts for their enrollees. Communities of color are more likely to be uninsured. Thus they are also less likely to be offered the chance to negotiate for lower hospital fees.

This bill would address these problems by requiring hospitals in California to develop and post information about their charity care policies. They would have to cap fees for patients with incomes up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level at the amount charged by Medicare, Medi-Cal, and Worker's Compensation. The bill would also limit collection actions of hospitals.

In addition, the Attorney General would be given the authority to investigate whether hospitals are meeting the minimum charity care requirements and providing a sufficient level of charity care to justify their tax exemptions. Finally, this bill would require nonprofit hospitals that receive significant tax benefits from the state to provide reasonable charity care and reduced payment policies for low-income patients.

Thank you for your consideration of this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

name

address

city, state, zip

June 15, 2005

The Hon. George C. Runner
The California State Legislature
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Runner:

I am writing to request your support of AB 169. This bill will help end wage discrimination against women.

It has been over 40 years since the passage of the US Equal Pay Act. Yet according to the Census Bureau, in 2004 women on average earned 76 cents to each dollar paid to their male counterparts. Over a working lifetime, this wage disparity costs the average American woman an estimated $523,000 in lost wages. This negatively impacts her in the short term. But it hurts her in the long term as well because it lowers her Social Security benefits and pensions. This wage disparity particularly affects families in which women are the only income earners—single women, divorced women, and widows.

AB 169 would amend the California Labor Code to strengthen individuals' private right of action to recover costs of pay discrimination. If an employer has been found to have discriminated, the employee would be entitled to recover the balance of the unpaid wages and collect liquidated damages and civil penalties.

In 1963, the year of the Equal Pay Act's passage, full-time working women were paid 59 cents, on average, to each dollar paid to men. If women in 2004 were paid 76 cents for every dollar paid to men, that means that in the last 41 years the wage gap has narrowed by only less than a half-cent per year! Obviously, the current laws aren't working and more must be done to address this injustice.

Please vote for AB 169.

Sincerely,

SB 131 (Wes Chesbro, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: Existing law provides that federally qualified health center services and rural health clinic services are covered benefits under the Medi-Cal program. These provisions require that these care providers be reimbursed on a per-visit basis. However, they may elect to have pharmacy or dental services reimbursed on a fee-for-service basis. This bill would allow these care providers to be reimbursed on a fee-for-service basis for inpatient cardiology or inpatient obstetrical services. The bill requires the state to get federal approval of this change.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on May 26. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 189 (Wesley Chesbro, D–Arcata)
Purpose: To require a healthcare service plan and health insurer to provide coverage for the medically necessary treatment of substance-related disorders, excluding caffeine-related disorders, on the same basis that coverage is provided for any other medical condition. The bill would authorize a plan and insurer to limit non-hospital residential care to 60 days per calendar year.
Status: Double-referred to the Senate Committee on Banking, Finance, and Insurance and to the Senate Health Insurance Committee. No hearing date set yet. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 388 (Charles Poochigian, R–Fresno)
Purpose: To establish a one-year, pilot program in three unnamed jurisdictions to disseminate information regarding current prison penalties for the personal use of a firearm during the commission of certain felonies. Each county would be eligible for up to $1 million in federal grant funds for the program.
Status: Approved by the Senate Public Safety Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on May 26.
LLP Position: Probably support, pending naming of the jurisdictions.

SB 670 (Joe Dunn, D–Santa Ana)
Purpose: To express the apology of the State of California to those individuals who, from 1929 to 1944, were illegally deported, or coerced into emigrating, to Mexico as a result of the Mexican Repatriation Program, and to require that a plaque be placed and maintained in a public place to commemorate this event.
Status: Approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for vote on May 23.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 840 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To make all California residents eligible for specified healthcare benefits under the California Health Insurance System, which would, on a single-payer basis, negotiate for or set fees for healthcare services provided through the system and pay claims for those services.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on May 23.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 862 (Don Perata, D–Oakland)
Purpose: To increase the minimum wage in California.
Status: Introduced. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Probably support pending actual dollar amount.

SB 1071 (Tom McClintock, R–Thousand Oaks)
Purpose: To end automatic cost of living adjustments (COLAs) for people in CalWORKS. COLAs would occur only if approved by two-thirds of each legislative house in the annual budget bill.
Status: Referred to the Senate Human Services Committee for a vote on April 26. Hearing postponed by committee. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Oppose.

SCR 18 (Jim Battin, R–La Quinta)
Purpose: To proclaim November 2005 as California Indian Heritage Month, encourage its observance with activities that celebrate our uniqueness as Americans, and commend California Indian nations for their outstanding contributions to this state.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

SCR 22 (Jim Battin, R–La Quinta)
Purpose: To proclaim September 15 to October 15, 2005, inclusive, as California Hispanic Heritage Month, and encourage all Californians to observe this event in communities throughout the state.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

Women's Issues

AB 21 (Lloyd Levine, D–Van Nuys)
Purpose: The original intent of this bill was to prohibit a pharmacist from declining to dispense a contraceptive or emergency contraceptive. Now it specifically permits them to do so in certain circumstances.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Business and Professions Committee. Awaiting a final vote on the Assembly floor.
LLP Position: Oppose unless language allowing pharmacists to refuse to sell contraceptives is removed from the bill.

AB 59 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To provide significant sentence enhancements for domestic violence committed when the accused knew that a child under the age of 18 was present.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Public Safety Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 70 (Bill Maze, R–Visalia)
Purpose: To require the Department of Motor Vehicles to provide a new set of license plates to a registered owner of a vehicle who provides certain evidence of having been the victim of rape or sexual battery.
Status: Approved by the Senate Transportation Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 96 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To require a five-year sentence enhancement for any high-risk sex offender convicted of a felony, or who pleads no contest to one.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Public Safety Committee. Hearing canceled by the author. The bill is probably dead. **LLP Position:** Watch.

AB 99 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To provide that restraining orders issued in domestic violence cases may have a duration of not more than five years (up from three years in current law) by the discretion of the court.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee for a vote on June 7.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 106 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To require the courts of each county to establish a one-time amnesty program for fees, penalties, and assessments that were imposed in domestic battery cases, and that have been delinquent for not less than six months as of January 1, 2006. It would provide that the amount scheduled by the court be 70% of the total fees, penalties, and assessments and would set forth other parameters of the amnesty program.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Public Safety Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 112 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To require the courts to order priority for the enforcement of certain protective orders issued by the court. Priority would be given when an emergency protective order is issued based on the belief that there is imminent danger to the person or persons being protected. Also people being restrained by the order would be prohibited from owning, possessing, purchasing, receiving, or attempting to purchase or receive a firearm while the protective order is in effect.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate. Not assigned to a committee yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 114 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To provide that when a defendant is accused of child abuse in a criminal action, evidence of the defendant's prior acts of domestic violence may be admitted to prove the defendant's conduct.

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Legislative Update

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Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate. Not assigned to a committee yet.
LLP Position: Watch.

AB 169 (Jenny Oropeza, D–Carson)
Purpose: To increase the penalties for employers who pay women less than men for the same work and to mandate the types of damages employees should recover if they are successful in bringing a civil action against their employer for willful violations of pay equity law.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Awaiting a final vote on the Assembly floor. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 291 (Paul Koretz, D–West Hollywood)
Purpose: To require the state's maternal and child health program, operated by the state Department of Health Services, to require that pregnant women and new mothers be screened for postpartum mood and anxiety disorders, at designated intervals. This would require a physician or other healthcare practitioner to review and discuss the screening tool with the patient. The bill would require the physician or other healthcare practitioner to present the patient with an information sheet on postpartum mood and anxiety disorders.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Health Committee for a vote on April 5. Hearing canceled by the author. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Support if amended to make the screening voluntary.

AB 322 (Jenny Oropeza, D–Long Beach)
Purpose: To enact the Athletes Bill of Rights and enumerate the rights available to a pupil relating to gender equity in athletics. The bill would require the State Department of Education to post the bill of rights on its Web site and require a school district that elects to offer competitive or club sports to its pupils to print and post posters setting forth the bill of rights in several locations in schools.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Awaiting a final vote on the Assembly floor. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 429 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To make several changes to law which increase the chances that a protective order, resulting from workplace violence or domestic violence, are promptly served on the accused.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee for a vote on June 21.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 506 (Cindy Montanez, D–San Frenando)
Purpose: To require each school district to establish a policy and protocol, including reporting procedures and response requirements, for dealing with teen dating violence, as defined, in middle schools and high schools. This would also require the State Department of Education to incorporate teen dating violence education curriculum into the health curriculum framework at its next revision.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Education Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 634 (Sally Lieber, D–Santa Clara)
Purpose: To require an international marriage broker to provide information to a foreign recruit, as defined, in his or her language, consisting of an American client's criminal and marital history information.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1288 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To require a court, or require them to consider as part of a protective order in domestic violence cases, to compel the abuser to surrender any guns. This would allow the local police or sheriff to tell a domestic abuse victim, in such cases, that the abuser has purchased a gun.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate. Not assigned to a committee yet.
LLP Position: Watch.

ACR 2 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To proclaim the month of October 2005 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AJR 3 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: *To petition the president and Congress to protect and uphold the intent and substance of the Supreme Court decision in* Roe v. Wade, *relating to reproductive rights, and to encourage all Americans to participate in the national celebration, "The March for Women's Lives," in recognition of that decision's historic importance in promoting women's rights.*
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee for a vote on June 7.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 180 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require hospital-based training centers to train medical personnel on how to perform medical evidentiary examinations for victims of human trafficking, and to develop guidelines for the reporting and management of it. The bill would also require that peace officers be trained in identifying signs of human trafficking.
Status: Referred to Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on May 26.
LLP Position: Support.

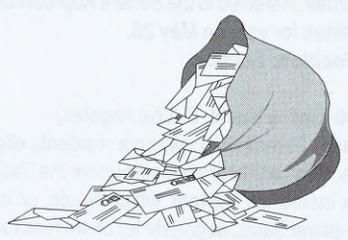
SB 585 (Christine Kehoe, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To tighten the laws requiring someone to surrender any guns when he or she is the subject of a protective order in a domestic abuse case.
Status: Approved by the Senate Public Safety Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 615 (Liz Figueroa, D–Fremont)
Purpose: To require the state to do an education campaign aimed at promoting the awareness of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and its link to cervical cancer. The program would be supported by private donations or appropriations by the legislature.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on May 23.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 617 (Jackie Speier, D–Hillsborough)
Purpose: To establish the Gender Specific Standards for Women in Prison Task Force and charge it with evaluating certain conditions in all publicly and privately operated correctional institutions for women, and reporting on those conditions to the Secretary of the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency. The bill would require pregnant inmates to be housed separately and to receive specified care.
Status: Approved by Senate Public Safety Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on May 23.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 644 (Deborah Ortiz, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To require that a pharmacist dispense prescription drugs and devices in a timely way unless to do so would violate the pharmacist's moral views or when the pharmacist views the prescription to be illegal or contraindicated for the patient. This bill prescribes the conditions under which the pharmacist may refuse to dispense the prescribed item.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on May 23.
LLP Position: Oppose.

SB 1030 (Dennis Hollingsworth, R–Murrieta)
Purpose: To state that California law does not require a business establishment to provide nonessential services to a member of the public, if doing so would violate one's conscience due to a sincerely held religious belief.
Status: Referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet. The bill is probably dead.
LLP Position: Oppose. Author's office says this bill would allow a druggist to refuse to dispense prescription birth control medication.



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